

Guru Gobind Singh Ji - His Mission and Vision

Amrita Kumari^{1***}, Dr BrajKishor Ram^{2*},

1. Research Scholar,

2. Assistant Professor

* Faculty of Social Science (Department of History), Purnea University, Purnea, Bihar, India

**Araria Colleges, Bihar, India

Corresponding Author: Amrita Kumari ,

Email address:- Email-akrajak.101096@gmail.com

Abstract: Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, was a spiritual guide and a tireless champion of human dignity. He stood out as a religious reformer, mystic, poet, philosopher, and scholar—while also being a fearless warrior and astute military leader. His entire life was devoted to fighting injustice and oppression in order to build a fair and compassionate society. In *Bachitar Natak*, his poetic autobiography, he clearly stated his divine purpose: **to defend the virtuous, uplift the oppressed, and eliminate evil**. He promoted unity among all people, condemned discrimination, and advocated for equality, harmony, and compassion. Guru Gobind Singh was a gifted writer whose literary contributions added great value to India's cultural and spiritual legacy. His poetry reflects a blend of devotion and courage, uniting the spiritual with the heroic. He introduced the idea of using armed resistance not for conquest, but for defending truth and righteousness. With deep spiritual insight, he created the **Khalsa**, a collective of devoted followers bound by equality, purity, and unwavering faith in one Supreme Being. This spiritual brotherhood also introduced democratic principles into Indian society, making Guru Gobind Singh a visionary far ahead of his time. His ideals continue to inspire humanity today. Guru Gobind Singh's teachings offer timeless guidance for building a peaceful, just, and united world—free from divisions of caste, creed, or geography.

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Introduction

When Guru Gobind Singh was entrusted with the leadership of the Sikh community, the circumstances were far from favorable. The Sikh movement, rooted in principles of liberalism in political, social, and religious spheres, faced stiff resistance from the ruling Mughal regime under Emperor Aurangzeb, who was intolerant of any such progressive ideologies. Religious thinkers like Sarmad, numerous Sufi saints, and Guru Tegh Bahadur had already paid with their lives for advocating freedom of thought and belief.¹

Internally, the Sikh administration was in decline. The **Masand system**, which once played a key role in organizing the community, had become deeply corrupt and self-serving. The Hindu population was demoralized and directionless, while the Hill Rajas were preoccupied with preserving their feudal privileges rather than serving the interests of their people. The Sikh community was still reeling from the trauma of Guru Tegh Bahadur's unjust execution, and to add to the complexity, Guru Gobind Singh was still quite young when he rose to leadership.

Despite limited resources and enormous challenges, Guru Gobind Singh chose not to respond with cruelty

or vengeance. Instead, he upheld high moral values while delivering a powerful and effective response to oppression and decay.

Through his visionary leadership, Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikhs into a force for progress—not only for their own community but also for the broader nation and humanity as a whole. His deep understanding of human nature, psychological responses, and the dynamics of the existing social structure allowed him to guide the community through one of its most difficult phases with wisdom and courage.²

Guru's Vision

Guru Gobind Singh was a soul of immense greatness and spiritual depth. His vision, the creation of the **Khalsa**, and his vast literary contributions were all deeply interwoven and reflected a unified philosophy. Through his writings, he gave voice to the core principles of **Gurmat** (the Sikh doctrinal ideology), making them accessible and meaningful to the people.

Building upon this ideological foundation, Guru Gobind Singh actively took up arms—not for conquest, but for the **liberation and upliftment of society**. He dedicated his entire life to this noble

cause, using both words and action to bring about a profound transformation in Indian society.³

To establish a society free from injustice, exploitation, and oppression, Guru Gobind Singh declared his objective clearly:

"Dharam Yudh ko Chao"—an aspiration for a righteous war.

This wasn't a call to violence, but a call to resist evil and uphold moral duty.

Unlike traditional Indian philosophies that dismissed the material world as illusory, Guru Gobind Singh recognized it as real and meaningful. He emphasized that human beings must strive to better their worldly conditions, guided by truth and righteousness. His struggle was centered on the **establishment of a just order**, where the virtuous would govern and the wicked would be vanquished.

Guru's Approach

To achieve his vision, Guru Gobind Singh employed a powerful combination of **theology, literature, poetry, and philosophy**. These tools served to awaken and reshape the consciousness of the people. Through rigorous training and education, he was able to uplift their spirits and transform their mindset.⁴

In doing so, he unlocked the suppressed potential of the masses—potential long stifled under the oppressive weight of **Mughal tyranny** and the rigid, outdated social structure perpetuated by orthodox Hinduism. He turned a dispirited people into a vibrant, dynamic force—ready to live and, if needed, to die for the values of **truth, justice, and righteousness**.

Salutations to the noble soul—

Who chants the Name of the Lord with his lips,
And meditates within on the **battle for righteousness**.

Who views the human body as a vessel for that divine struggle,

And, recognizing its impermanence, boards the boat of God's praise

To cross the treacherous ocean of worldly existence.

Blessed is he—

Who transforms his body into a **temple of patience**,
And lights it with the **lamp of wisdom**.

Who, armed with the **broom of true knowledge**,
Sweeps away the filth of **fear and cowardice**,

Making himself fit for the divine mission.

(Sri Krishan Avtar, *Bachitar Natak*, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. 1, p. 570)

The Voice of Truth and the Vision of the Guru

"I speak the Truth—let all listen carefully:

He who is immersed in true love alone shall realize the Divine."

(*Akal Ustat*, *Dasam Granth*, Vol. 1, p.14)

These words from *Akal Ustat* echo the central philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh: that the path to realizing God lies in genuine, selfless love—love that transcends rituals, boundaries, and fear. This vision was not merely spiritual in essence but formed the very foundation of a revolutionary way of life for his followers.⁵

Living Separateness (Niarapan): The Identity of the Khalsa

One of Guru Gobind Singh's most profound ideas was the concept of **"living separateness"**—*Niarapan*. He instructed his disciples, the Khalsa, to live distinctly, not in isolation, but as a **moral and spiritual vanguard** in a society yet to be uplifted. He warned that once this distinct identity is diluted, the community risks being absorbed and losing its purpose.

"As long as the Khalsa maintains its distinct identity, it shall have my protection and strength. If it imitates others and loses its way, I shall withdraw my support."

(*Khalsa Mehima*, *Sarabloh Granth*)

This was not a call to exclusion but a commitment to internal strength and integrity—so that the Khalsa would **inspire change** without being changed by the corrupt influences around them. He believed that cultures that fail to defend their essence inevitably dissolve into the larger tide of dominant forces.⁶

Guru Gobind Singh's Mission as a Timeless Leader

Guru Gobind Singh's leadership transcended the immediate challenges of his era. He envisioned a community not bound by narrow religious patriotism but inspired by **universal ideals**—a force for righteousness across ages and geographies. His mission was not only to respond to contemporary oppression but to **prepare his followers for the future**, equipping them with the tools—spiritual, intellectual, and martial—to establish **the rule of virtue** globally.

"He is the true Khalsa who remembers the ever-awakened Light day and night,

and holds no other in his heart;

Who walks the path with deep affection and does not, even by mistake,

place faith in tombs, idols, or monasteries;

Who seeks no reward for charity, austerity, or pilgrimages,

and holds only the One Lord in his heart—

he alone is the pure, immaculate Khalsa."

This vision culminated in the creation of the **Khalsa**—not merely as a religious order, but as a

community of awakened souls committed to truth, courage, humility, and service. The Khalsa was to be **God-conscious yet world-engaged**, spiritual yet action-oriented, distinct yet universally compassionate.⁷

Akal Purakh ki Fauj: The Divine Army of Justice
Guru Gobind Singh envisioned his followers not merely as spiritual seekers, but as warriors of righteousness—"Akal Purakh ki Fauj", the Army of the Almighty. He instructed them to uphold a vision of society built on justice, equality, and freedom. This was a society where no one would face **discrimination based on caste, creed, region, wealth, birth, or gender**. He stood for a world where **every individual could live with dignity**, freely express their thoughts, choose their profession, and live in mutual love and respect.

"O God, grant me this boon, that I may never refrain from righteous actions.

Let me not fear the enemy when I go into battle—

Let me emerge victorious with firm resolve,

And may I ever remember and sing Thy praises.

When the end of my life comes, may I die fighting on the battlefield."

(Epilogue to Chandi Charitar, Dasam Granth, Vol. 1, p. 99)

This prayer captures the essence of the **Khalsa spirit**—a soul rooted in devotion and a body prepared for action, ready to sacrifice for truth, justice, and divine will.

Dharam Yudh: The War of Righteousness

Guru Gobind Singh never glorified violence. He emphasized **Dharam Yudh**, a war fought in defense of righteousness—not for conquest or revenge, but as a moral duty. He taught that the **use of arms must be a last resort**, only when all peaceful means to resolve conflict have failed.

Even then, the **Khalsa was strictly forbidden** from using force against the innocent, weak, or defenseless. The sword was to be wielded with **compassion, not cruelty**—a sacred tool of justice, not domination.

"When all other means fail,

It is righteous to draw the sword."

(Zafarnama, Guru Gobind Singh)

Guru Gobind Singh thus created a **unique ideal**: a warrior-saint who fights not out of anger or pride, but with love in the heart, discipline in action, and unwavering devotion to God. The Khalsa was to be the **embodiment of courage, wisdom, humility, and selfless service**—a living example of what it means to be truly free and truly just.⁹

Conclusion

Guru Gobind Singh envisioned and actively worked to shape a society of **saint-soldiers**—a spiritually awakened and socially responsible community that eventually evolved into a **nation in its own right**. To realize this vision, he placed immense emphasis on the idea of **self-determination**, achieved through both **political and spiritual weapons**. The **sword (kirpan)** symbolized the political means to resist injustice, while the **Word (shabad)** represented the spiritual path to divine realization. Alongside these, he gave his followers a **distinct identity and lifestyle**, which set the Sikhs apart from all previous religious traditions.¹⁰

The creation of the **Khalsa** was a bold and transformative mission. Guru Gobind Singh, by his own belief and writings, saw himself as a divine instrument chosen to **restrain humanity from destructive actions**. In turn, the Khalsa was created as the **willing force to carry forward this sacred mission**—a body of fearless individuals constantly engaged in the battle against evil and the protection of righteousness.¹¹

More than just an internal reform, the formation of the Khalsa was a **culmination of the long-standing spiritual and social mission** begun by Guru Nanak and continued by the Gurus that followed. It was a move not only to unify the Sikh community but to offer a **radical model for society**, built on **justice, equality, and spiritual consciousness**.

From a sociological standpoint, the Khalsa represented a revolutionary new social mosaic. It rejected all **tribal, caste-based, and hierarchical affiliations**, as well as **superstitions, meaningless rituals, and social discrimination**. Instead, it promoted a **universal outlook**, transcending narrow prejudices of birth, belief, or background. The Khalsa stood firmly for:

- **Righteousness and justice**
- **Social equality and collective welfare**
- **Faith in the formless (Nirgun) God**
- **Honest labour and equitable sharing of its fruits**
- **Rejection of all forms of exploitation**

This new social structure **awakened the suppressed energy** of the people and redirected it into a powerful, collective force—nourishing the broader **national movement** of the country.

In the religious domain, the Khalsa was a **truly egalitarian institution**. All members were equal—not just among themselves but even in their relationship with the Guru. This principle was most

powerfully demonstrated in **1699**, when Guru Gobind Singh **first administered Amrit (baptism) to the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones)** and then, in an unprecedented gesture of humility and unity, **received Amrit from them himself**. This act symbolized the **complete identification between Guru and disciple**, blurring all lines of hierarchy.¹²

As Bhai Gurdas Singh beautifully observed in his *Var*, in awe of the moment:

“Let all hail Guru Gobind Singh—who was at once the Guru and the Disciple.”

This profound moment, also emphasized in the *Sarabloh Granth*, remains a cornerstone of Sikh spiritual democracy and unity.

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